



COVID-19 in Victoria: what the lockdown changes mean for services

Services in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now waive gap fees and access additional allowable absences.

On 21 August the Victorian Government announced that from 1pm Regional Victoria will enter lockdown and additional measures will come into effect in Metro Melbourne.

Details can be found on the [Victorian Government's COVID-19 response website](#).

During the lockdown, early learning centres, child care, family day care are closed but open to vulnerable children and the children of authorised workers if they cannot be supervised at home.

On 21 August 2021 the Australian Government declared the state of Victoria a [Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspot](#). This triggers extra support for the sector.

Gap fee waivers

Services in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now waive gap fees.

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. You can waive fees from 13 August 2021 in Metropolitan Melbourne and from 22 August 2021 in Regional Victoria. This applies to all service types.

In addition, services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

[Check key dates for gap fee waiving in your region.](#)

Absences

Services in metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria can now access additional allowable absences.

The absences are available until the end of the Commonwealth Hotspot declaration.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences.

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Check key dates for accessing additional allowable absences in your region.](#)

Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in Victoria may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, visit [business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

If you have to close

You must tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your state or territory regulatory authority.

For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Victorian Government's COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.

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